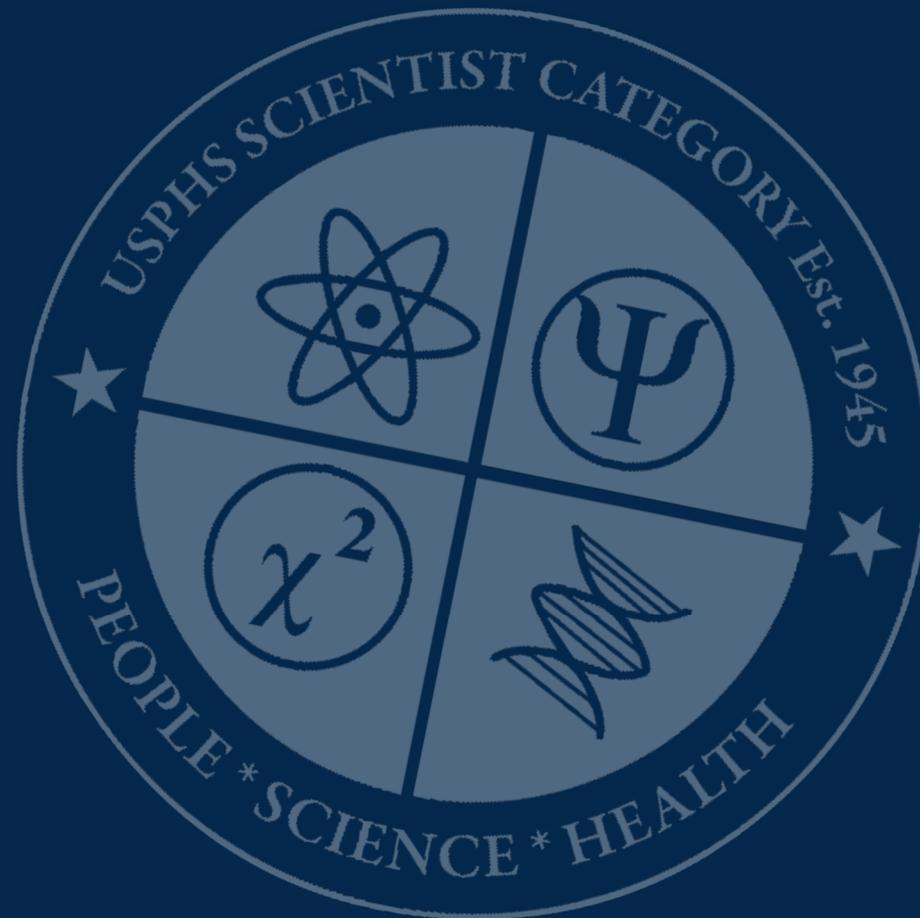


The Scientist Officer



Contents

- Page 3** VADM Jerome Adams Visits CDC
- 4** Scientists Presented at the 128th Society of Federal Health Professional (AMSUS) Annual Meeting
- 6** How long must we wait?
- 7** The Importance of Mentoring
- 8** U.S. Public Health Service Weight Standards in 2020
- 9** Remote Area Medical Mission—Dec 2019
- 10** Thankful for all things big and small
- 11** FAPAC Inaugurates 2019 Future Star Program
- 12** Scientist Officers Present Their Work APHA 2019 Annual Meeting & Expo
- 13** Experiences of a Scientist Officer at a Remote Area Medical (RAM) clinical mission in the Lonestar State
- 14** SciPAC Fist Bumps
- 16** Social Events
- 19** New Scientist Officers

VADM Jerome Adams Visits CDC

By LCDR Angela Thompson-Paul, CDR Deborah Dee, CDR Erika Odom, and CAPT Jennifer Williams

On December 10-11, 2019, VADM Jerome Adams visited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. RADM Wanda Barfield, RADM Betsy Thompson and 19 U.S. Public Health Service Officers representing several divisions mustered to welcome him to CDC's Chamblee campus. VADM Adams addressed the PHS Officers as a group, then took a few minutes to talk and shake hands with each PHS Officer individually. While at Chamblee campus, the Surgeon General met with leadership and representatives from the Office on Smoking and Health, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, and the Division of Oral Health. CDC PHS Officers hosted another meet and greet on Wednesday December 11, prior to the start of the ERASE Maternal Mortality conference where VADM Adams gave the opening plenary talk.



VADM Jerome Adams addressed PHS Officers who welcomed him to CDC's Chamblee Campus.
Photo credit: Demetrius M. Parker, CDC.



Photo credit: Alessandra Capriles, CDC.
Back row: CAPT Hunter Smith, LT Emily Ussery
5th row: LCDR Rashid Njai, LCDR Denise Duran, LCDR Angela Thompson-Paul, LCDR Robert Montierth
4th Row: LCDR NaTasha Hollis, CDR Kevin Chatham-Stephens, CDR Djenaba Joseph, CDR Sherry Burrer
3rd Row: LCDR Donna Addison, CAPT Jennifer Wiltz, CAPT Graydon Yatabe, CDR Jean Ko, CAPT Letia Boseman
2nd Row: CAPT Jennifer Williams, CAPT Matt Ritchey, CAPT Naomi Tepper
Front Row: LCDR Ekwutosi Okoroh, VADM Jerome Adams, RADM Wanda Barfield, RADM Betsy Thompson

Scientists Presented at the 128th Society of Federal Health Professional (AMSUS) Annual Meeting

By CAPT Sally Hu, LCDR Oliver Ou, and CDR Eric Zhou

The 128th Annual AMSUS meeting was held on December 2-6, 2019 in National Harbor, MD. The annual meeting provides an education and professional development platform for federal health professionals from the Department of Defense (DOD), Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services (HHS), Homeland Security and industry partners to advance health through interagency collaboration. The 2019 AMSUS annual meeting theme was Transforming Healthcare through Partnership and Innovation.

CAPT Sally Hu of Defense Health Agency (DHA), DOD, initiated the panel of "Improve Healthcare and Health Research and Development (R&D) through Partnership and Technology Transfer" and invited the panelists, including CDR Eric Zhou, from government, industry, academia to share how they improve healthcare and health R&D through partnership and innovation in their own unique way; their success stories; and lessons learned.

CAPT Sally Hu introduced the DHA Technology Transfer (T2) office as the central point for T2 activities within DHA and across all military treatment facilities; provided a DHA T2 office overview, strategic vision and priorities to facilitate T2 to develop military medical solutions for battlefield; and discuss how to work with DHA through a variety of T2 mechanisms (e.g., Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA) or licensing) to develop DOD medical technologies to commercialized products such as therapeutics, devices/diagnosis and vaccines.

CDR Eric Zhou discussed the very successful Healthy Mind (HMI) Initiative which is a collaborative effort among the USPHS, federal, and county government partners, and Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) community organizations. He emphasized the importance of partnership in HMI's success and shared HMI's goal, strategic plan, organization, implementation, achievement, and impact on addressing the HHS 'and UPHS' priority in mental health in the nation.

In addition, LCDR Keisha Houston also gave a presentation and at least three Scientists: CDR Yi Zhang, LCDR Nancy Tian, and LT Dantrell Simmons presented their posters separately.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)



CDR Eric Zhou (Left) and CAPT Sally Hu (right) at the "Improve Healthcare and Health R & D through Technology Transfer and Partnership" panel session

Scientists Presented at the 128th Society of Federal Health Professional (AMSUS) Annual Meeting

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

By CAPT Sally Hu, LCDR Oliver Ou, and CDR Eric Zhou

For the first time during AMSUS annual meetings, the U.S. Public Health Service Day was held on December 6, 2019. USPHS senior leadership including the Chief Scientist Officer, CAPT John Eckert, provided key insights into U.S. Public Health Service Modernization efforts, Surgeon General's priorities, and the Prevention through Active Community Engagement (PACE) Program.

More specifically, CAPT John Eckert provided his perspectives on how Scientist Category meets the mission priorities of USPHS during the Chief Professional Officers (CPO) panel discussion. He acknowledged the enormous contributions Scientist Officers made, from research and innovation in medicine and healthcare, to detection, prevention and treatment of disease, to providing direct clinical care and serving underserved and vulnerable population, to deploying to public health emergencies and natural disasters. He highlighted that Scientist Officers are leading the way in many areas, including PACE Program (LCDR John Pesce, CDR Luz Rivera), DOD/JTAPIC (CAPT Mark Clayton), and the Defense Advanced Research projects Agency (DARPA) Fellows Program (LCDR Gwendolyn Hudson, LCDR John Pesce). He also mentioned the Scientist Officers' contributions to E-cigarette/vaping surveillance, epidemiology and response.

In 2020, the U.S. Surgeon General will serve as chair for the AMSUS Executive Advisory Council and the USPHS will be the host service for the AMSUS Annual Meeting. If you are interested in helping the organization of the 2020 AMSUS meeting, please contact CAPT David Lau (David.Lau1@fda.hhs.gov), USPHS AMSUS Committee Senior Advisor, and CDR Cody Thornton (Cody.Thornton@hhs.gov) or LCDR Evette Pinder (evette.d.pinder.mil@mail.mil), the Chair and Co-Chair of the USPHS AMSUS Committee. Your attendance and support are strongly encouraged.



Chief Professional Officers (From left to right): CAPT John Gibbins (Veterinarian), CAPT Mercedes Benitez McCrary (Therapist), CAPT John Eckert (Scientist), RADM Ty Bingham (Pharmacist), RADM Aisha Mix (Nurse), CAPT Brian Lewis (Medical), CAPT Jeanean Willis Marsh (Health Services), RADM Kelly Taylor (Environmental Health), and RADM Timothy Ricks (Dentist) presented during the CPO Panel discussion on the U. S. PHS Service Day in National Harbor, MD

How long must we wait?

By LCDR Ginny Bowen

If you have a U.S. Public Health Service mentor, it's likely you've had a conversation about promotion at some point in the past year. Undoubtedly, the phrase "tempered expectations"—or some variant of it—has crept into conversation as mentors struggle to explain the new recipe for successful promotion to their mentees.

It's not that the benchmarks aren't clear; they're quite clear! It's simply that excellent PHS Officers can meet all benchmarks and still fail to be promoted, leaving many of us scratching our heads and wondering if performance or wait-time matter most.

The trudge from each rank to the next has become exceedingly arduous as the Corps intentionally slows career progression to rectify a rank structure that, over decades, became too "top heavy," with nearly twice as many Captains (O-6) as Lieutenants (O-3). Though we cannot unravel all mysteries of promotion, we can use Scientist data available to the State of Scientists (SOS) Team to answer one question we all find ourselves asking: "How long must we wait?"

The following three figures depict the mean and median time-to-promotion for promoted PHS Officers by rank. A time-to-promotion was calculated for each promoted PHS Officer by subtracting their call-to-active-duty (CAD) year from their temporary promotion year. PHS Officers were then averaged and ordered by time-to-promotion to produce means and medians, respectively. We were unable to calculate the time between each rank promotion; all statistics reflect the time from CAD to the relevant promotion. PHS Officers with prior uniformed service are included in each calculation, though—for interpretation—we must remember that the CAD to USPHS for these PHS Officers does not reflect total 'time in service' as it does for other PHS Officers.

The first two graphs depict a six-year trend from 2013–2019 and the third graph depicts a four-year trend from 2015–2019. Each analysis uses all publicly available promotion lists on the CCMIS website at the time the analysis was performed. Given the small size of each promotion group, no further stratification is possible without revealing the identities of some PHS Officers.

These figures tell their own story, but the slowing of career progression is visually clear across all ranks. Mentors would be wise to advise their mentees that the wait may be just as important as the performance.

Please email vbowen@cdc.gov with any questions about this analysis. Please contact the SOS Team Lead, LT Brad Goodwin, at bpgoodwin@cdc.gov if you would like to suggest other analyses that make good use of SOS survey data.

Figure 1: Time from CAD to Lieutenant Commander (O-4) among promoted Scientists, 2013–2019

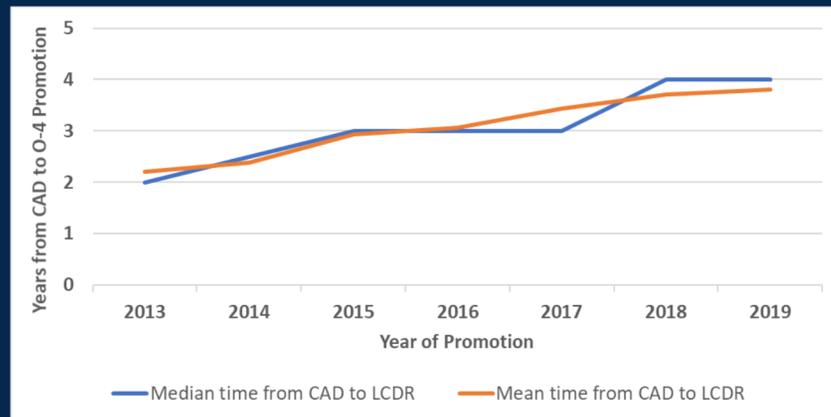


Figure 2: Time from CAD to Commander (O-5) among promoted Scientists, 2013–2019

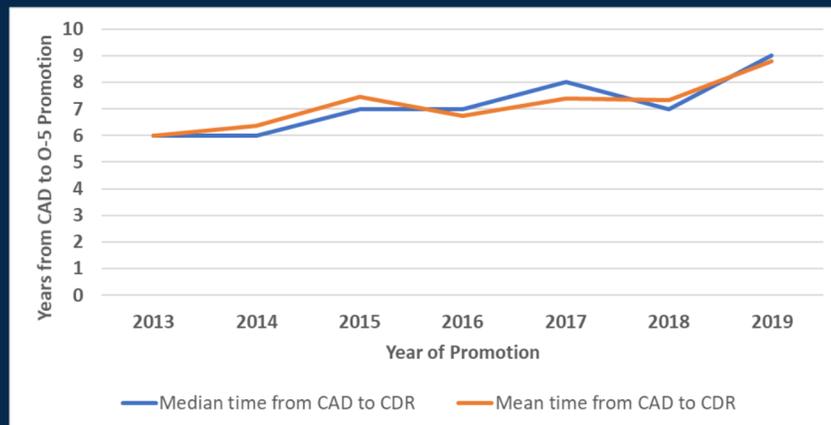
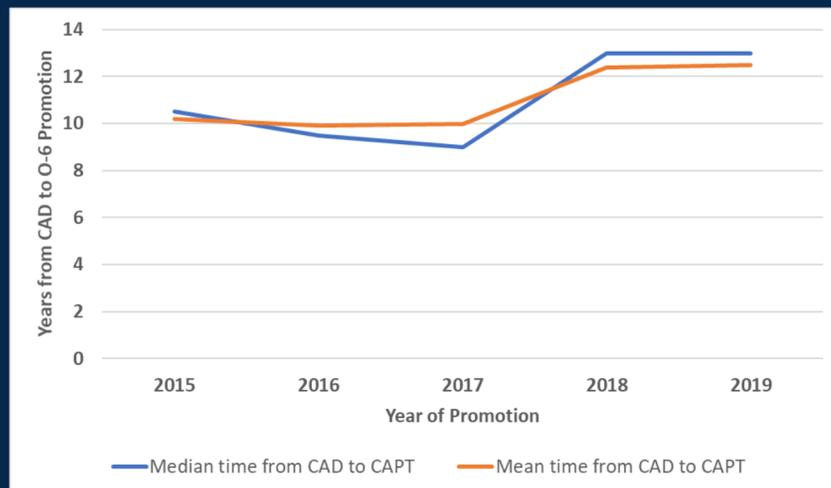


Figure 3: Time from CAD to Captain (O-6) among promoted Scientists, 2015–2019



The Importance of Mentoring

By CDR Emily S. Jentes and LCDR Rachel Slayton

Mentoring is an important part of any career, but especially with the United States Public Health Service (USPHS). It is a way for PHS Officers to share experiences, provide guidance, and discuss common interests. Mentors provide mentees with one-on-one career guidance in the areas of career assignments, mobility, awards, deployments, curriculum vitae review, career strengths and weaknesses, and recommendations to enhance promotion potential. We (Emily and Rachel) have found this program to be exceptionally helpful to both of us as we work towards our career goals.

Emily's perspective (Mentor): I began mentoring Rachel a few years ago and have really enjoyed getting to know Rachel and to hear about her work. It has been really fun to watch her grow professionally and strategize about her career long term. Being able to share my experiences with her has been fulfilling for me as I have been able to think about what the most important steps in my career progression were and discuss that with her. Personally, I enjoy working with PHS Officers and thinking of new and different ways to assist them in achieving their career goals. I also have tried to make sure that we are both up to date with USPHS guidance and think of ways that we can utilize our skillsets to the best advantage of the Corps. I really see this as a collaboration and a way to help us both grow professionally. Finally, mentoring is so rewarding to me because you get to meet amazing PHS Officers who are doing fantastic work!

Rachel's perspective (Mentee): I have really enjoyed having Emily as a mentor. It is very helpful to have the perspective of someone who is just a few years ahead of you and is very familiar with the landscape of the USPHS. She has provided me with good strategies to identify exciting opportunities within USPHS, within SciPAC, and beyond. Emily also makes sure that her mentees are kept up to date on the latest USPHS guidance and can maintain basic readiness. I would suggest that all junior PHS Officers consider finding a mentor through SciPAC's mentoring program.

SciPAC offers two mentoring programs, peer mentoring and mentoring, for PHS Officers looking to discuss career progression, promotion readiness, and Officership with junior or senior PHS Officers, respectively. For more information, see <https://dcp.psc.gov/osg/scientist/mentoring-SC.aspx>.



CDR Emily S. Jentes (mentor) and LCDR Rachel Slayton (mentee)

U.S. Public Health Service Weight Standards in 2020

By LT Patrick Sears

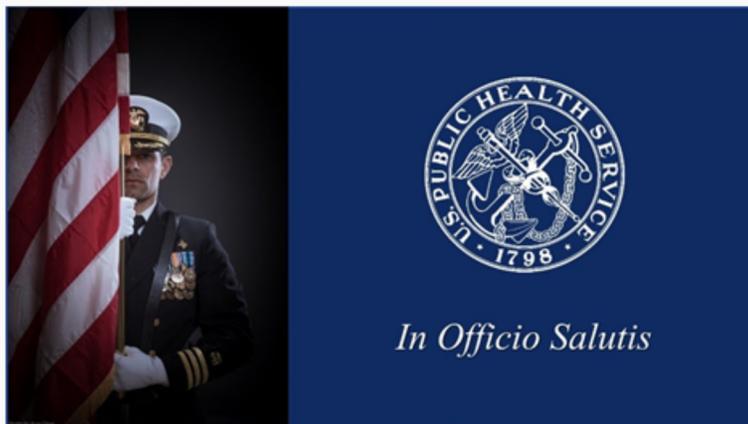
This New Year is one of increased accountability for U.S. Public Health Service Officers, especially pertaining to weight standards, as we continue to align ourselves more with the readiness standards of our sister uniformed services.

According to the Readiness Compliance memorandum, effective 16 October 2019:

"Officers who are **not in compliance with the Retention Weight Standards** are required to submit, **in addition to their Annual Physical Fitness Test (APFT), a quarterly report** to RDB...on Form PHS-7044-1, "Verified Weight Report.""

"**Effective 1 January 2020**, an Officer who fails to submit a completed Form PHS-7044-1 as required in POM 821.66 will be marked as "**Not Qualified**." Such Officers will be marked as "Not Qualified" for each subsequent month that he/she fails to submit a completed Form PHS-7044-1 until he/she complies with the required submission."

"**Effective 1 January 2020**, an Officer will be marked as "Not Qualified" if he/she fails to meet the retention weight standard during the previous 12 months and failed to demonstrate acceptable progress towards meeting the standard...**acceptable progress for weight loss is approximately 3.5% baseline body weight per quarter, or approximately 15% baseline body weight loss per year.**"



The Physical Examination Requirements memorandum was recently released and is **effective as of 5 December 2019**. Some notable points of the memorandum include an **obligation for PHS Officers to have an annual physical examination, dental examination, and behavioral health screening in addition to providing a comprehensive medical history. Of note, PHS Officers' weight will be recorded by their evaluating physician as a component of the annual physical.**

As a reminder, the SciPAC Readiness Subcommittee is dedicated and passionate about ensuring all Scientist Officers meet weight requirements. Interested in learning more about how the SciPAC Readiness Subcommittee can assist you in meeting weight standards? Please contact LCDR Tomov (yxm6@cdc.gov), Health Optimization Workgroup. For questions regarding policy, please contact CDR Bjork (iyk4@cdc.gov).

December 2019 Remote Area Medical Mission

By LCDR Alesha Harris

Remote Area Medical (RAM) Missions are designed to bring free dental, vision, and medical to under-served communities. U.S. Public Health Service Officers have been deployed to attend RAM events for a while now, but within the last couple of years, we've been attending additional RAMs throughout the year (instead of just the RAM associated with the annual USPHS Symposium).

I've been deployed to three RAMs. My first RAM (and first deployment) was to the Oklahoma RAM associated with the June 2018 USPHS Symposium. My second RAM was the Baltimore RAM in September 2019, and this was my third RAM (Camp Springs, MD December 2019).

I've been fortunate to have served on the Optometry Team during all three RAMs. Therefore, I've been able to truly build upon what I have learned each time. After three RAMs, I can use several instruments and conduct several tasks for the Optometry Team. I've also been able to make work friends with the Optometrists (fellow PHS Officers).

One of my favorite moments from the RAM was seeing a few of my fellow Scientists! They each currently serve or have served on a SciPAC subcommittee with me (see picture).

During this RAM, I learned to use the RAM data entry system to input data collected from patients. Because of my background in complex subjects and my current skill set of processing orders for PHS Officers, I was able to quickly learn the RAM data entering system and accurately enter data for each patient. I was glad to make an impact with that task.



Scientist Officers serving at the December 2019 RAM. Left to right: LCDR Iman Martin, LCDR Alesha Harris, LT Adelaida Rosario, and LT Lacreisha Ejike-King.

I was undergoing the beginning symptoms of a cold during this RAM. I even started to lose my voice during the middle of the first day. That made the RAM a bit challenging for me, and something that I'll be much more prepared for next time. However, since this was a local RAM, I was able to get a good night's sleep, medicine, and come back the following day to work hard again. This RAM was Friday and Saturday instead of the typical Saturday and Sunday, so I was able to make time for relaxation and sleep on that Sunday before returning to work.

My "pearls of wisdom" for fellow Scientist Officers are to remember that you're not just gifted at science; you're also gifted at identifying solutions, initiating change when you see the need for it, learning new things in a short amount of time, working with others, communicating important details, doing repetitive but necessary work, providing excellent customer service, etc. To prepare for deployment: wait to hear/read all of the information given, and then ask any remaining questions. It may feel silly asking whether to bring civilian clothes or food, but ask if it has yet to be addressed. Get your "day job" to a good stopping place and update your boss on the status of remaining concerns and upcoming work. Manage the expectations of your loved ones. Lastly, based on this most recent RAM, pack some cold and/or pain medicine.

Thankful for all things big and small

A letter home during the Ebola Outbreak Response Deployment

By LT Oren Mayer

Last night, an American, a Finn, and a pair of Ugandans sat down at Café Cosmo in Arua, Uganda to share a Thanksgiving meal. It wasn't long before we were taking turns sharing our thanks and toasting each other's happiness. We all were thankful for our families, our friends, and our jobs. Our families that support us while we disappear for weeks or months at a time. Our friends who are always enthusiastic about hearing all our stories. And our jobs that allow such a diverse cluster of schlubs to meet in Uganda, sit around a table with questionable structural integrity, drink cold glass bottles of liquid refreshment, and make just a little bit of a difference to the world. When I finally turned in for the night, I was feeling good, proud even. One little bit of betterment brought to the world by me.

But this morning, after all the high of yesterday and last night, I woke up to find myself quickly confused; my phone had countless unread messages (no big surprise, it was Thanksgiving after all; I figured everyone was sending the standard messages of happy pictures/best wishes/tongue-in-cheek overeating regrets). No, what confused me were all the messages were "are you ok?" and "send us a proof of life".

Cripes, what did I miss?

Yesterday, while we were celebrating the end of our successful hands-on training on how to work with Ebola samples and eating our local "Thanksgiving Feast", militia rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) attacked an Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU), killing 4 and injuring 5 more. Horrible. Saddening. Anger inducing. Scary.

I don't blame people for worrying about me when I deploy; they hear Ebola and Africa and killings, and they worry. But I'm safe. I'm secure. I'm in Uganda, not the DRC. Here, Ebola is a disease. It elicits fear, but that's because Ebola is scary. Here, the government supports the testing, the people support the testing. And I'm here supporting them; testing potential Ebola blood samples from the field and teaching local staff how to do it themselves. Sure, I'm an accidental fingerstick away from getting sick, but let's be honest, I'm here because I'm good at what I do, and there is redundancy after redundancy after redundancy in all our lab practices to ensure that the chance of me infecting myself is essentially zero (I'd have to really mess up to get exposed, and that's a good thing; a testament to how well we've prepared the policies and practices to protect health care workers performing Ebola testing even when mistakes are made).

In the DRC however, more than 300 attacks on Ebola Responders have killed 6 and wounded more than 70 in 2019 alone. I go to work and get thanks; they go to work and have the constant threat of someone with a gun storming their small lab and putting a bullet in their back just because they have the gall to try and help those that need it most.

I'm thankful for people who face death from more than just disease. Who willingly face off not just against some of the scariest, most dangerous, most stigmatizing diseases that exist, but also against the constant threat that death will come from those they're desperate to help. Those who are scared, those who are evil, or those who hope to capitalize on it for their own political or financial gain. These people aren't soldiers, aren't mercenaries. They're not trained to take life, but to save it. And for some, at the cost of their own. If that's not worthy of thanks, I don't know what is.

So, I'm thankful. Thankful to wake up safe in my room able to go to work without fear. Thankful to see all those messages from concerned family and friends, reaching out to make sure I'm ok. And thankful to those who step out into the scary, that risk their lives not from what their working with, but because of it. That they can find the worth and overcome the fear to fulfill the need. Thankful I can learn from them about what it means to be part of something bigger than myself.

Be thankful all, for whatever touches you.



From Left to Right: Markus Kainulainen (CDC/Viral Special Pathogens Branch; the Finn), Apollo David (Uganda Virus Research Institute; one of the Ugandans); Jackson Kyondo (Uganda Virus Research Institute; the other Ugandan); LT Oren Mayer (CDC/Viral Special Pathogens Branch; the American) enjoying sodas during a Ugandan Thanksgiving Feast after a week of training staff to safely handle, rapidly test, and report back Ebola diagnostic results in Arua, Uganda.

FAPAC Inaugurates 2019 Future Star Program

By LCDR Xinzhi Zhang and Huaying Zhao

In support of Executive Order 13583 on establishing a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote diversity and inclusion in the Federal workforce, the NIH, Parklawn, and FDA chapters of the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) launched a new Future Star Program (FSP) to offer individual mentoring and professional development for high school students in the fall of 2019. FSP is open to all and aims to assist the next generation to identify federal, state, and local government youth internship opportunities, training, and volunteer opportunities; improve their communication/interview skills; and develop a comprehensive leadership experience. FSP aims to attract the best and talented young generation leaders into the 21st century public service workforce, improve workforce diversity, and serve the American people.

The 2019 FSP program runs from October 2019 through September 2020. Applications opened to the public in July 2019, and the community responded warmly to the call for nominations. Following a roundtable discussion among the FSP Advisory Board, co-chaired by Dr. Richard Nakamura, former Director of NIH Center for Scientific Review; Ms. Lily Qi, Delegate, Maryland General Assembly; and Dr. Clarence Lam, State Senator, Maryland General Assembly on September 17, 2019, eight nominations of high school students were selected for the first cohort of FSP. On October 23, 2019, the FSP kickoff meeting was successfully held in Rockville, Maryland. The first FSP cohort was first introduced into the program by LCDR Xinzhi Zhang, FSP Co-Director, with background information on FAPAC and the goal of the FSP. Honorable Lily Qi shared her amazing path to becoming a first-generation Chinese American lawmaker in Maryland. The FSP fellows were greatly inspired and asked Delegate Qi many questions regarding leadership, public policy making, and how to contribute to the community. To enhance the understanding of the program structure, Mr. Kelvin Xu, FSP Co-Director, laid out a detailed plan for FSP fellows. The students began their networking activities within the group at the kickoff meeting. They also anonymously elected their team leader and deputy leader. In the following weeks, the FSP fellows will initiate the program activities including mentoring and a community service project.

Founded in 1985, FAPAC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization representing the civilian and military Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) employees in the Federal and District of Columbia governments. FAPAC is the oldest and largest AAPI affinity group for federally employed Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. This FAPAC FSP program is sponsored by the FAPAC NIH, HHS Parklawn (representing IHS, AHRQ, SAMHSA, and HRSA), and FDA Chapters; Asian American Health Initiative (AAHI); and Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services.



FSP 2019 Cohort with Delegate Lily Qi (fourth from the right), Maryland General Assembly



FSP 2019 Cohort with Kelvin Xu and LCDR Xinzhi Zhang (far right), Co-Directors of Future Star Program

Scientist Officers Present Their Work: APHA 2019 Annual Meeting & Expo

By LT Nicholas Deputy and CDR Zewditu Demissie



Philadelphia, PA provided a scenic and historic backdrop for the APHA 2019 Annual Meeting & Expo. Pictured here is Independence Hall, where both the Declaration of Independence and US Constitution were signed.

Presentations by Scientist Officers included:

CDR Zewditu Demissie: Driving under the influence of marijuana: Prevalence among high school students, associations with risk behaviors, and a comparison to alcohol-impaired driving (oral)

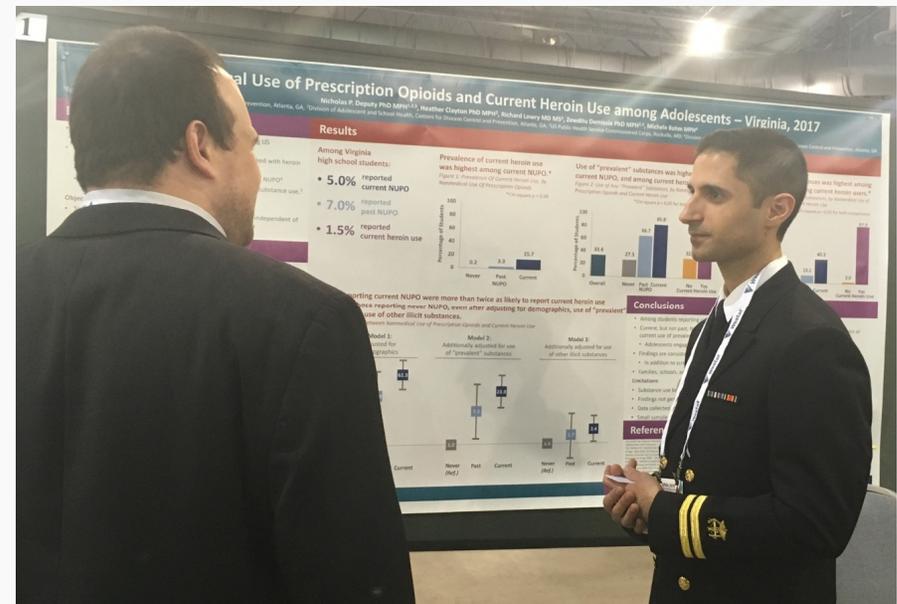
CDR Zewditu Demissie: Changing racial-ethnic disparities in adolescent sexual risk behaviors — national Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2007–2017 (poster)

LT Nicholas Deputy: Nonmedical use of prescription opioids and current heroin use among adolescents – Virginia, 2017 (poster).

APHA's 2020 Annual Meeting & Expo will be held from October 24-28 in San Francisco. We look forward to seeing you there!

The 147th American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting & Expo, held from November 2-6, 2019, brought together nearly 13,000 public health leaders from around the world. This year's meeting was held in Philadelphia – also known as the "City of Brotherly Love" – and provided a scenic and historic backdrop for public health practitioners, researchers, students, and advocates to share their work, learn, and network with peers.

The theme for this year's meeting was "Creating the Healthiest Nation: For science. For action. For health." This theme underscores core public health principles that drive public health research to action in order to promote health and was reflected across hundreds of presentations during the five-day conference. Consistent with this theme, two Scientist Officers from CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health gave three presentations across various health topics designed to promote health among youth.



LT Nicholas Deputy presents his poster.

Experiences of a Scientist Officer at a Remote Area Medical (RAM) Clinical Mission in the Lonestar State

By LCDR Shiny Mathew (Scientist) and CDR Evan Shukan (Veterinarian)

In July 2019, USPHS collaborated on medical efforts with across four sites in Texas under the banner of RAM Operation Lone Star Mission. RAM, established in 1985, is a major non-profit provider of free mobile clinics providing medical, dental, and vision care to the underserved populations across the United States and overseas. RAM is serviced by volunteers, some of whom have been PHS Officers in the past. This is the first time that the event was viewed as a USPHS deployment to carry out RAM's mission to prevent pain and alleviate suffering by providing free quality health care to those in need. As a Scientist Officer deployed for the event, LCDR Mathew joined her fellow PHS Officers from all eleven categories to serve in logistics role to set up medical, dental, and vision clinics at four Texas cities on the U.S.-Mexican border: Laredo, Mission, San Juan, and Brownsville. It was amazing to see the team effort between RAM and USPHS in converting local high schools to state-of-the-art medical and dental care facilities. The facilities accounted for intake centers, triage areas, medical, dental, and vision clinics, preventive education counseling, and medical records. Once the set up was complete, the Scientist Officers performed a variety of roles such as health educators, and medical, dental and vision care assistants, and utilized epidemiology backgrounds to assess medical records.

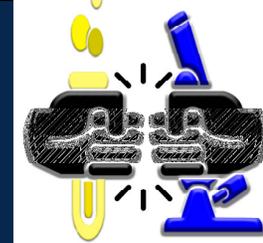
The four treatment facilities saw an estimated 20,000 walk-in patients for medical, dental, and/or vision care over a span of five days. Enduring the grueling hours and long days, our medical team of physicians, physician assistants, nurses, physical therapists and pharmacists conducted physicals and immunizations. Our dental team worked tirelessly and treated patients for routine cleaning, extractions and fillings. Similarly, eye exams were conducted on several sites and eye glasses were provided free of charge to hundreds of local residents. Health educators briefed the patients on a variety of topics including opiate abuse prevention, nutrition and spay/neuter and vaccination of pets, and emergency preparedness for the whole family. The PHS Officers received a surprise visit from RADMs Erica Schwartz and Susan Orsega and CAPT Mehran Massoudi who anticipated that this event will be the first of many collaborations with RAM.

Based on the lessons learned from being a health educator at a RAM event, a group of PHS Officers from multiple agencies and categories initiated the RAM Health Educators' Working Group to improve the outreach at future RAM events. One goal that the Working Group intends to achieve is to cater the preventive education based on the needs of the communities where RAM would be held. For example, education on opiate abuse prevention took center stage in Baltimore, whereas, in states like Mississippi which has one of the lowest national average for breastfeeding, educating the public on the benefits of breast feeding would take centerstage. Secondly, the importance of PHS Officers who are multilingual in helping with health education could not be overstated. For example, at the Lonestar RAM event, in the absence of Spanish fluency, LCDR Mathew relied on young volunteers from the audience as well as our own Scientist Officer translator, LT Jason Caballero, to help translate on signs and symptoms of opioid overdose. Another takeaway was to prepare a cache of necessary handouts for PHS Officers tasked with health education prior to deployment in order to have better outreach. Based on advice from RADMs Trent-Adams and Orsega, the Working Group plans to team up with Prevention Through Active Engagement (PACE) Surgeon General's Education Teams (SGET) for the future events. Thus far, the Working Group has already provided direct support for the Baltimore and DC RAM events as well as provided materials and support through local PACE SGETs.



Veterinarian, CDR Evan Shukan, answering public health questions for Brownsville RAM clinic attendees.

SciPAC Fist Bump—LCDR Shiny Mathew



LCDR Shiny Mathew, a Scientist Officer at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), is receiving *two* celebratory fist bumps.

1

LCDR Mathew received a Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) Mentorship Award for advancing the FDA mission by mentoring U.S. Army Fellows who are engaged in the FDA-U.S. Army Fellowship program. This yearlong fellowship program matches U.S. Army Scientists with FDA preceptors to learn more about navigating the waters of regulatory processes that leads to new drug approval. LCDR Mathew mentored three PHS Officers (two O-4 and one O-5) assigned to the Division of Psychiatry Products, in the Office of New Drugs (OND), over the last 4 years. Based on this uniformed services collaboration, the Army has benefitted in developing safe and efficacious drugs for battlefield pain and a variety of psychiatric diseases including post-traumatic stress disorder. One mentee currently serves as a Product Manager for the Neurotrauma and Psychological Health Project Management Office at the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity at Fort Detrick in Frederick, Maryland, and attributes her improved proficiency in the drug regulatory process to the fellowship training provided by LCDR Mathew.

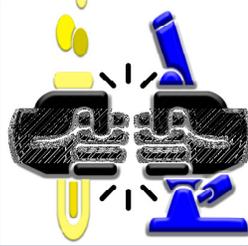


LCDR Shiny Mathew receiving the Mentorship Award at the CDER Awards Ceremony. From left to right: Dr. Janet Woodcock, CDER Director, LCDR Shiny Mathew, Dr. Ellis Unger, Office of Drug Evaluation 1 Director, and Dr. Peter Stein, OND Director.

LCDR Mathew was also selected to receive an Outstanding Service Medal for her leadership role in creating new standards for the regulatory review of rapid acting antidepressants. Unlike the antidepressants of the past which routinely take 6-8 weeks to alleviate symptoms of depression, the latest novel class of rapid acting antidepressants show efficacy within hours to days making them highly valuable to treat depression where other therapies have failed. Unfortunately, these rapid acting antidepressants also have potential concerns of irreversible neuronal death (excitotoxic brain lesions) observed in animals after drug administration. In the absence of FDA nonclinical guidance to the pharmaceutical industry on the assessment for these brain lesions, LCDR Mathew's leadership led to implementing these new safety standards. The standards have led to the safe approval of SPRAVATO® (Esketamine) the first novel antidepressant in 40 years and first-ever drug approved for treatment resistant depression, benefitting 130 million depression sufferers worldwide.

2

SciPAC Fist Bump—LCDR Alaine Knipes



LCDR Alaine Knipes, a Scientist Officer at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is receiving a celebratory fist bump for the birth of her son, Arsalan. Baby Arsalan was born on August 27, 2019.

Congratulations!

DC Area Social Team Event—Ice Skating!

By: LCDR Tyann Blessington



On January 25, 2020 DC region Scientist Officers, LCDR Tyann Blessington and LT Lacreisha Ejike-King, tested their ice skating skills at Rockville's Town Square outdoor ice skating rink. Although, neither will likely be participating in future winter Olympics, fun was had by all. Neither PHS Officer fell or broke any bones, which may indicate their natural-born talent. PHS Officers interested in joining another ice skating event, should contact the Visibility Subcommittee, DC Social Team Lead, LCDR Alesha Harris (Alesha.Harris@hhs.gov). A Scientist Officer Ice Capades troupe may be in our future!

Atlanta Scientists Celebrate Mardi Gras!

By: LCDR Angela Thompson-Paul

Seven Atlanta-area Scientist Officers and significant others gathered to celebrate Mardi Gras on Saturday February 22. LCDR Hilda Razzaghi hosted the gathering at her home. The small gathering was greatly enjoyed by those in attendance giving all a chance to get to know one another and some members of our SciPAC leadership including SciPAC Chair CDR Loren Rogers and COF Liaison CDR Kamil Barbour.



PHS Officers (Left to Right): LT Kathleen Hartnett, LCDR Marci Wright, CDR Kamil Barbour, CDR Loren Rodgers, LCDR NaTasha Hollis, LT Marisa Hast, and LCDR Hilda Razzaghi.

2020 SciPAC DC Area Mardi Gras Social

By: LT Lacreisha Ejike-King



The phrase “Laissez les bons temps rouler!” is commonly associated with Mardi Gras celebrations. The 2020 D.C. Mardi Gras Social embodied this saying. On February 22nd, six DC region Scientist Officers, one Health Services Officer, and their families celebrated Mardi Gras at a restaurant in Northern Virginia. The event provided an opportunity to catch up with familiar faces to network and exchange witty repartee while dining on Southern cuisine. Mardi Gras is a time for celebration, and our Mardi Gras Social was no exception – we celebrated one another’s accomplishments and esprit de corps. Cheers to another successful D.C. Socials event and may the good times continue to roll!

Left to right: LCDR Tyann Blessington, LT Lacreisha Ejike-King, LCDR Jorge Muniz-Ortiz and his Daughter Paloma (not pictured, because taking the photo- is his wife Debra), LCDR Alesha Harris, Clint Rossiter (LCDR Rossiter’s husband), CDR Lana Rossiter, and LCDR Jonathan Leshin. Also not pictured, but attended was LCDR Tacheke Monique Bailey, HSO category.

New Scientist Officers



LT Dodd and CAPT Eckert (Scientist Chief Professional Officer) at LT Dodd's pinning ceremony

LT Brett A. Dodd Jr.

Mental Health Unit Psychologist

LT Dodd received his undergraduate education at Norfolk State University (a Historically Black College/University) while also competing as a Track & Field athlete, and received his Psy.D in Clinical Psychology from Regent University in 2015. After practicum placements in various Virginia state prisons, he began his Bureau of Prisons career as a pre-doctoral intern at the Federal Medical Center in Lexington, KY. He then worked as a Staff Psychologist at the Federal Correctional Institute in Cumberland, MD, for over 3 years prior to joining Federal Medical Center (FMC) Devens in late 2018 as a Mental Health Unit Psychologist. He currently remains at FMC Devens where he is also a major rotation supervisor for their pre-doctoral psychology internship program. His professional interests include complex trauma, treatment of minority populations, residential treatment programming, and multicultural competency development. LT Dodd is licensed in the state of Virginia since 2016.

LT Xia Michelle Lin

Dr. Lin received her PhD in Physiology from the University of Notre Dame and her MSPH in Biostatistics from Emory University. She started her public health career at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Officer in 2013, assigned to the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, and has been an epidemiologist with the Immunization Services Division since 2015. She has led many vaccination coverage studies and is leading CDC's methodology development to use data from immunization information systems for estimating national vaccination coverage.

She has always admired uniformed services. As soon as she became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 2017, she applied to join the U.S. Public Health Service. She was very excited to be called to active duty in June 2019. Having graduated from OBC 110 as a member of the Honor Squad, she wears the USPHS uniform proudly every day.



New Scientist Officers

LT Olivia McGovern

LT McGovern is an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer in the Respiratory Diseases Branch at CDC Headquarters in Atlanta. Her work focuses on research and response to bacterial respiratory diseases, and she is currently preparing for a workshop for bacterial meningitis surveillance Officers in Mozambique. LT McGovern received her PhD in Microbiology and Immunology and an MS in Hospital and Molecular Epidemiology from the University of Michigan. She joined the United States Public Health Service in June 2019 and was a member of Officer Basic Course 110, where she had the privilege of being part of the Honor Squad. Go Squad 3!



Just-graduated Scientist Officers from Officer Basic Course 113 gather with the category's Chief Professional Officer, CAPT John J. Eckert, on September 20, 2019 at the William F. Bolger Center in Potomac, Maryland. Pictured, from left: LT Shannon York, LT Anna Chard, LT Julia Pringle, LT Jessica Jacobs, CAPT John J. Eckert, LT Eric Mooring, LT Amanda Hott, LT Philip Salvatore, and LT Kerui Xu.

LT Eric Mooring

LT Mooring joined the U.S. Public Health Service last summer and completed Officer Basic Course 113 in September 2019. As an Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer with CDC, he is assigned to the Alaska Division of Public Health in Anchorage, Alaska. So far, he has had the opportunity to work on numerous topics including the ongoing outbreak of e-cigarette, or vaping associated lung injury, work-related fatality surveillance, and botulism. Before becoming a U.S. Public Health Service Officer, LT Mooring completed a Doctor of Science in epidemiology from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. His research focused on geographic aspects of the control of yaws (a neglected tropical disease) and of tuberculosis. In addition to his background in infectious disease epidemiology, LT Mooring is an emergency medical technician (EMT) and is particularly interested in systems and structures for organizing emergency responses. He is from Lincoln, Nebraska.

New Scientist Officers



LT Brandi Freeman-Ponder

LT Brandi Freeman-Ponder is a Laboratory Leadership Service Fellow in the Respiratory Virus Branch at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She is researching antigenic and sequence variability of the respiratory syncytial virus, overseeing compliance of the team's federal select agent program, and serving as a Laboratory Operations Coordinator for the 2018 Ebola response. LT Freeman-Ponder received her doctoral degree in Biomedical Sciences from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. She joined the U.S. Public Health Service U.S. Public Health Service in June as a graduate of the Officer Basic Course 110.

LT Marsha Samson

LT Marsha Samson is an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Officer assigned to the Infant Outcomes Monitoring, Research, and Prevention Branch at CDC. Prior to starting EIS, LT Samson studied the relationship between lifestyle factors and lung cancer incidence and mortality as a postdoctoral fellow at Georgetown University. LT Samson received her PhD from the University of South Carolina and her Master's degrees in Public Health and Health Services Administration from Barry University. Her work primarily focused on health disparities and prevention research. LT Samson is now working on examining the interactions of folic acid and vitamin B12 supplementation on biomarkers and determinates of health. LT Samson recently deployed to the Democratic Republic of Congo to improve the data management structure for the local health department of Goma to better characterize and assess the Ebola epidemic and response efforts.



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